

2026/ success story

The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation

About The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation

UICF supports Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada by helping channel philanthropic funding toward community-led initiatives focused on education, culture, employment, youth leadership and more.

Uses CanadaHelps for

- Custom donation forms
- Charity profile
- Annual fundraising campaigns, and more

With CanadaHelps, the charity has seen a **652.6% increase in CDF revenue** in the past two fiscal years and a **37.6% increase in overall revenue from their charity profile**.





"From the very beginning, our mandate came directly from the communities we serve – rooted in employment, education, and the support of Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada."

~ Chris Googoo, Chief Operating Officer, The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation

ABOUT THE ULNOOWEG INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION

The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation (UICF) supports Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada by helping channel philanthropic funding toward community-led initiatives.

Created in 2018, the foundation builds on its parent organization Ulnooweg's 40-year history of supporting Indigenous economic development, education, and community wellbeing. The Foundation's role is to act as a bridge, connecting donors, foundations, and philanthropic partners with projects led by Indigenous communities themselves, and ensuring that resources flow directly to programs designed by and for Indigenous communities.

UICF has six focus areas: youth leadership, education and training, community-led and land-based learning, language and culture, post-secondary access, and employment and entrepreneurship. The work emphasizes long-term capacity building, providing tools for donating to Indigenous communities, pursuing investment opportunities, and increasing public understanding of Indigenous philanthropy.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CANADAHELPS

The Foundation uses CanadaHelps to facilitate online donations and support its digital fundraising efforts. Through the platform, donors can contribute to various community funds and initiatives, helping direct support to projects.

UICF uses CanadaHelps for:

- Custom donation forms
- Charity profile
- Annual fundraising campaigns
- Automated receipting, and more.

"We have seen growing and consistent support through the CanadaHelps platform over the years, and looking back, you can really trace the growth of our program alongside that relationship," shared Chris. **Among other benefits, the charity has also seen a 652.6% increase in CDF revenue in the past two fiscal years and a 37.6% increase in overall revenue from the charity profile.**

Overall Fundraising

UICF's fundraising reflects a diverse approach that combines institutional partnerships, community-driven campaigns, and digital giving tools to sustain its work.

Institutional and Major Gift Partnerships

In partnership with the MasterCard Foundation's EleV initiative, UICF has accelerated its work in youth leadership and education, **granting over \$9.15 million across five years to create meaningful, community-informed change across Atlantic Canada.** This long-term partnership has provided stability, credibility, and – equally importantly – a network of referrals that has opened doors to new foundations and funders across Canada.

Dreamers Gala

Under their other charitable arm, Ulnooweg Education Centre, the team has hosted the Dreamers Gala, an annual dinner event focused on storytelling and community building. **The Gala serves as an opportunity to introduce new audiences to the Foundation's mission, using personal narratives and project impact to connect with prospective donors.**

Digital Fundraising

UICF runs year-round and annual campaigns such as Giving Tuesday campaigns, using CanadaHelps custom donation forms to receive and track online donations. They also leverage the CanadaHelps charity profile to attract new donors and gain further visibility.

Designated Philanthropic Funds

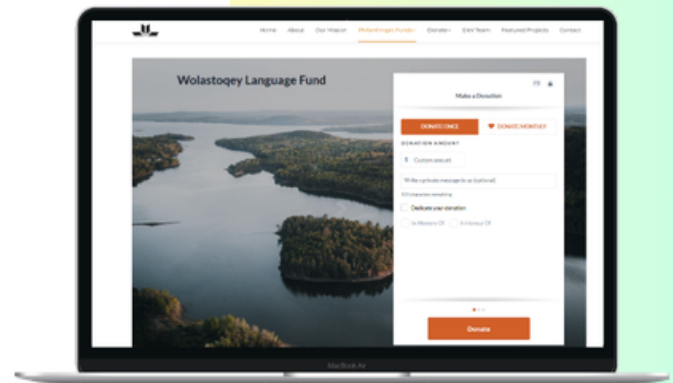
Donors can give to specific, named funds that support targeted community needs. These include the Wolastoqey Language Fund, the Balsam L'nu Scholarship Fund, the Red Tape Athletic Fund, and the Genevieve Francis Memorial Fund. **Each fund reflects a need that came directly from the community and represents UICF's commitment to donor-directed, community-informed giving.**

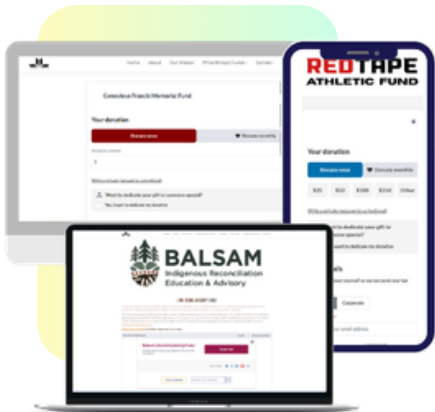
Digital Fundraising with CanadaHelps

CanadaHelps has provided UICF with a digital infrastructure to receive donations, manage campaigns, and grow its visibility among Canadian donors.

CUSTOM DONATION FORMS (CDF)

UICF links its CanadaHelps custom donation forms from its website as the primary channel for online giving. The forms allow donors to give directly to the Foundation or to specific philanthropic funds, offering a clear and organized giving experience that aligns with the Foundation's community-centred approach.





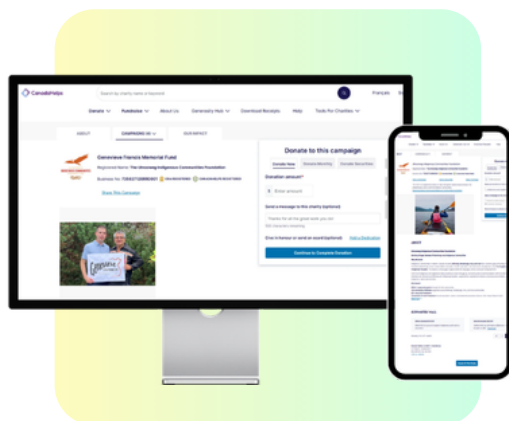
MULTIPLE PHILANTHROPIC FUNDS, ONE PLATFORM

CanadaHelps enables UICF to house and process donations to several distinct funds within a single platform. **Whether a donor wants to support language revitalization, youth scholarships, or athletics, they can do so through one centralized digital experience** – making it easier for UICF to manage, track, and steward those gifts.

GIVING TUESDAY CAMPAIGNS

UICF delivers its annual Giving Tuesday campaign through a coordinated digital approach, using CanadaHelps to host campaign pages and process donations.

Outreach is led through social media, website features, and targeted email communications that share impact stories and highlight giving opportunities. Content is rolled out in the weeks leading up to and during Giving Tuesday to build awareness, create momentum, and drive contributions within a focused campaign window.



CHARITY PROFILE

Over 5+ million donors use CanadaHelps to find and support causes. UICF maintains an active charity profile on CanadaHelps to find and support causes, which serves as a discovery point for donors searching for Indigenous-focused charities in Canada.

The profile has contributed meaningfully to donation growth, giving the Foundation visibility within a national network of givers. ***“The platform has given us a meaningful presence and visibility – both for our Foundation and for the communities we represent,”*** shared Chris.

AUTOMATED TAX RECEIPTING

Donors who give through CanadaHelps receive their tax receipts immediately and automatically – a feature that reduces administrative burden on the team while improving the experience for donors. **It has further enabled UICF's small team to focus on community relationships and programming rather than back-end tasks.**



Results from Using CanadaHelps

UICF's use of CanadaHelps has delivered tangible fundraising growth and increased visibility since the Foundation launched in 2018.

652.6% Increase in one-time donations revenue via CDF in the past two fiscal years

37% Increase in monthly revenue via CDF
Increase in overall revenue from CDF in the past fiscal year

18.5% Increase in monthly revenue via charity profile

37.6% Increase in overall revenue from the charity profile

ENHANCED DIGITAL FUNDRAISING

Since joining, UICF has raised approximately \$300,000 across both its charitable organizations – the Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation and Ulnooweg Education Centre – through CanadaHelps.

This figure reflects steady growth alongside the Foundation's expanding programs and donor relationships. UICF has seen an 652.6% growth in donations through custom donation forms in the past two fiscal years.



INCREASED VISIBILITY THROUGH CHARITY PROFILE

The CanadaHelps charity profile has played a meaningful role in attracting new donors, particularly those searching for Indigenous-led charities. This discoverability has opened the Foundation to a broader national donor base, seeing a 37.6% increase in overall revenue from the charity profile.

A GROWING DIGITAL FUNDRAISING PRESENCE

CanadaHelps provides UICF a credible, trusted platform on which to grow. As the Foundation builds its storytelling assets and donor communications, the platform is well-positioned to support accelerated fundraising in the years ahead.



Why The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation Recommends CanadaHelps

For UICF, CanadaHelps represents a practical and accessible way to receive philanthropy and grow a digital donor base. The platform simplifies online giving for donors while helping the organization share its work with a broader audience.

As UICF continues to grow – and as more Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada look to access the philanthropic ecosystem – having a trusted, reliable platform to manage digital giving is an important part of that foundation. The team is looking forward to deepening its use of CanadaHelps' features, including more targeted campaign tools and engagement strategies.

"CanadaHelps has given us a platform and visibility that have been genuinely valuable to our organization. As our capacity grows, we look forward to making even greater use of what the platform has to offer," shared Chris.

"We have seen growing and consistent support through the CanadaHelps platform over the years, and looking back, you can really trace the growth of our program alongside that relationship."
— Chris

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Impact on the Community

The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation's initiatives focus on strengthening cultural identity, creating educational pathways, and supporting community wellbeing.

Youth Leadership and Education

Through the EleV initiative with the MasterCard Foundation, UICF has funded a wide range of youth-led projects focused on building leadership pathways, improving educational retention, and reimagining what success looks like for Indigenous youth. Projects are community-informed: UICF's officers go directly into communities, listen, and bring proposals back through an internal review process – with no formal application required from communities.

Language and Culture Revitalization

The Foundation supports several efforts to preserve endangered Indigenous languages, including the Wolastoqey Language Fund.

One initiative supports a Wolastoqey immersion program led by a community Elder and language keeper, with university co-op students helping teach children from kindergarten onward. The Foundation has also supported the creation of Canada's first accredited Indigenous dance program in New Brunswick high schools, weaving language and culture into formal education.

Community-Led Projects

UICF funds projects that emerge from community conversations – including outdoor arts performances, youth centres, land-based camps, and cultural gatherings. One grant helped fund a forest production of a classic play translated into an Indigenous language; that initial project sparked further community dialogue that led to the creation of a fully-equipped youth centre with a gym, kitchen, and computer lab.

Post-Secondary Access and Scholarships

Through funds like the Balsam L'nu Scholarship Fund, UICF helps remove financial barriers for Indigenous youth pursuing post-secondary education. The Foundation also operates the Pathways to Engineering program in partnership with Dalhousie University, which prepares Indigenous youth for careers in engineering with an emphasis on the relationship between technical work and the natural world.

Athletics and Well-Being

The Red Tape Athletic Fund supports Indigenous youth participation in sport, recognizing that physical well-being, cultural identity, and community connection are deeply intertwined. Key initiatives include the Genevieve Francis Memorial Fund and the Red Tape Award, which celebrate and support youth achievement in athletics.

"Our approach is a holistic one. The youth from the communities themselves tell us what they need to build their leadership skills, and we support them in that – there is no formal application process standing between a community and the resources they're looking for."
— Chris

Goals Ahead

UICF is focused on deepening the impact it has built over the years – and on advocating for a longer-term approach to philanthropy that reflects the reality of generational and systems change. **The team has been vocal in philanthropic circles about the need for 15-year funding commitments rather than five-year cycles, arguing that true community transformation cannot be measured or achieved on short timelines.**

Looking ahead, **the Foundation is working to break down silos** – both within the Indigenous community and the broader philanthropic ecosystem – so that Indigenous organizations can approach funders with a unified voice and a shared strategy.

The **Foundation is also investing in its storytelling capacity**, gathering video and qualitative content to power stronger campaigns, attract new foundations, and better reflect the depth of impact its work is creating across Atlantic Canada.

On the digital fundraising side, **the team looks forward to exploring more of what CanadaHelps offers** – from smart giving tools to more targeted campaign forms – as internal capacity grows and the Foundation continues to build its donor community.

"Genuine transformational change requires a long-term commitment. When we talk about generational change, we mean at least 15 years – and that is the standard we hold ourselves and our partners to," shared Chris.

For more information about The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation and how to support their mission, visit ulnoowegfoundation.ca

Meet the Speakers



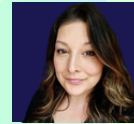
**Chris Googoo,
Chief Operating
Officer**

Chris Googoo is Chief Operating Officer of Ulnooweg and Executive Director of The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation, supporting Indigenous-led philanthropy across Atlantic Canada through community partnerships, youth initiatives, and programs grounded in culture, relationships, and long-term community wellbeing.



**Michelle Richard,
Managing
Director**

Michelle Richard is Managing Director of The Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation, guiding strategic growth, partnerships, and philanthropic initiatives that support Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada through trust-based, community-informed approaches to giving.



**Andrea Durfee,
Communications
Manager**

Andrea Durfee is the Communications Manager at Ulnooweg, leading strategic communications across the organization and its partners, supporting storytelling, digital engagement, and initiatives that amplify Indigenous voices, community impact, and relationship-based approaches to philanthropy.